

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PC-01 AID-05

ACDA-12 MCT-01 SY-05 HA-05 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06

CCO-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SCS-06 CA-01 (ISO) W

-----127743 261755Z /45

O 261450Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 022

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 5434

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, CG

SUBJECT: SHABA SECURITY

REF: LUBUMBASHI 556

1. ACCOMPANIED BY ZAMISH CHIEF, I MET WITH GENERAL BABIA AT HIS HOUSE EVENING MAY 25. WHILE WE TALKED OVER SEVERAL MATTERS, MAIN REASON FOR MY ASKING TO SEEM HIM WAS TO CONVEY MY SERIOUS CONCERN REGARDING INCREASING INDICATIONS OF A BREAK-DOWN IN COMMAND AND CONTROL OF FAZ TROOPS IN KOLWEZI AND ELSEWHERE.

2. I TOLD BABIA THAT WE WERE RECEIVING REPORTS OF FAZ LOOTING, HARASSMENT AND GENERAL INDISCIPLINE FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES, INCLUDING CIVILIANS BEING EVACUATED AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM KOLWEZI. IT APPEARED THERE WAS A PARTICULAR LACK OF CONTROL AMONG THE TROOPS OF THE KAMANYOLA DIVISION THERE. I SAID THAT, ASIDE FROM THE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS THIS CREATES FOR SECURITY, IF CONTINUED SUCH REPORTS RISKED HARMING ZAIRE'S IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES AND UNDERMINING OUR EFFORTS TO ASSIST ZAIRE IN
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AN HOUR OF CRITICAL NEED. I SAID THIS WAS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT THE ATTACK ON KOLWEZI SEEMED TO HAVE ENGENDERED INCREASED SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING OF ZAIRE'S SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

3. BABIA SAID HE WAS AWARE OF AND VERY CONCERNED BY THE PROBLEM I HAD DESCRIBED. HE NOTED THAT THE KOLWEZI ATTACK HAD DISPERSED A

NUMBER OF FAZ UNITS, SEPARATING THEM FROM THE COMMANDERS, AND THAT THE LEADERLESS TROOPS OF THESE UNITS WERE CAUSING MUCH OF THE PROBLEM. HE HAD CONSEQUENTLY INSTRUCTED GENERAL SINGA, COMMANDER AT KOLWEZI, TO TAKE FIRM AND PROMPT ACTION TO RESTORE COMMAND AND CONTROL. HE WAS CONFIDENT SINGA COULD DO THE JOB.

4. THIS MORNING, MAY 26, FRENCH CHARGE BAZIN CALLED ON ME TO EXPRESS HIS OWN DEEP CONCERN ABOUT WHAT HE TERMED AN ABSENCE OF ANY EFFECTIVE FAZ PRESENCE IN KOLWEZI. THIS CONCERN WAS BASED ON REPORTS FROM THE FRENCH COMMANDER THERE, COL. GRAS, WHO BAZIN SAID WAS ALSO IN TOUCH WITH FAZ HEADQUARTERS. I SUGGESTED TO BAZIN THAT HIS GOVERNMENT MIGHT USEFULLY RAISE THE MATTER WITH MOBUTU WHILE HE IS IN PARIS.

5. BAZIN SAID THE SPECIAL FRENCH MILITARY TEAM WHICH HAS BEEN SURVEYING THE SITUATION IN SHABA RETURNED TO PARIS EVENING MAY 25 WITH "IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS". WHILE HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO DETAIL THEM, IT IS EVIDENT THE FRENCH ARE FINDING THEMSELVES IN AN INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION IN SHABA. AS UNITS OF THE 2ND REP MOVE INTO AREAS NEAR KOLWEZI IN SEARCH OF EUROPEANS, THEY ARE RUNNING INTO POCKETS OF REBEL FIRE. NOT ONLY HAS THIS RESULTED IN RECENT FRENCH CASUALTIES, BUT IT RAISES THE SPECTRE OF THEIR GETTING INVOLVED IN A SERIES OF GUERRILLA-TYPE ACTIONS WHICH MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR THE FRENCH TO HANDLE WITH THEIR LIMITED PERSONNEL AND APPARENTLY VERY LITTLE HELP FROM FAZ. THEIR PROBLEM AT KOLWEZI IS MADE ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT BY THEIR HAVING TO SEND SOME OF THE

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2ND REP TO LIKASI, LUBUMBASHI AND OTHER TOWNS TO REASSURE THE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITIES THERE. BAZIN SAID HE HAD NO CONFIRMATION OF HOW SOON THE FRENCH TROOPS WOULD LEAVE ZAIRE, ALTHOUGH HE WAS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE LENGTH OF TIME THAT MIGHT BE REQUIRED TO REPLACE THEM WITH SOME KIND OF AFRICAN FORCE. HE REGRETTED THAT THE BELGIANS DID NOT SEEM INCLINED TO ALLOW THEIR FORCES AT KAMINA TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN SHOWING THE FLAG AMONG NERVOUS EXPATRIATES IN SHABA.

4. THE DILEMMA FOR THE FRENCH IN SHABA IS THAT THE LONGER THEY STAY THE MORE THEY RISK GETTING BOGGED DOWN IN A WIDENING AND PERHAPS BLOODY ROLE OF PROTECTING THE REGION. ALSO, THEIR CONTINUING PRESENCE AND ASSOCIATION WITH FAZ SEEM TO BE CAUSING INCREASING RESENTMENT NOT ONLY AMONG SHABANS IN THEIR AREA OF OPERATION, BUT ALSO AMONG CERTAIN ZAIRIAN ELEMENTS OPPOSED TO THE REGIME ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FRENCH FIND IT HARD TO PULL OUT BECAUSE OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECT THIS COULD HAVE ON EXPATRIATE SAFETY AND MORALE, AND GOZ PRESSURES TO STAY IN. THE DANGER FOR US IN SUCH A SITUATION IS THAT THE FRENCH MAY SEEK TO INVOLVE US MORE DIRECTLY WITH THEM IN SHARING THE BURDEN OF SECURITY ON THE GROUND.

(IN THIS CONNECTION, BAZIN -- PROBABLY REFLECTING GOF THINKING --

EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR STRENGTHENING SECURITY AT
THE INGA DAM COMPLEX "WHERE THERE ARE MANY AMERICANS".) WHILE IT
IS IN OUR INTEREST THAT SHABA BE DEFENDED AND THAT EXPATRIATES BE
PROTECTED AND ENCOURAGED TO STAY TO HELP RUN THE ECONOMY, I BELIEVE
THAT, BEYOND SPOT RESPONSES FOR ADDITIONAL LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, WE
SHOULD AVOID DIRECT BILATERAL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FRENCH.
WE SHOULD INSTEAD FACILITATE,
VIA TRANSPORT AND OTHER LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, THE QUICKEST POSSIBLE
ARRIVAL OF AN AFRICAN OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORCE, THEREBY RELIEV-
ING THE FRENCH OF SOME OF THE WEIGHT OF THEIR PRESENT BURDEN AND
IDENTIFYING OURSELVES WITH A SECURITY PRESENCE WHICH POLITICALLY
SHOULD BE MORE WIDELY ACCEPTED BOTH WITHIN ZAIRE AND ABROAD.
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